

Irish Radio Transmitter Society Radio News Bulletin

Sunday 10 July 2022

New Outgoing-QSL Manager

Our longstanding QSL manager for outgoing cards has retired and passes on the torch. Dave, EI6AL writes: "I am delighted to announce the appointment of the new IRTS Outgoing-QSL Manager Andreas Kull, EI1903. He has taken over the position from Dave, EI6AL with immediate effect. The postal address for outgoing QSL cards is now Villa Maria, Askinchy Upper, Coolgreany, County Wexford, eircode Y25TR72"

YOTA in Croatia

The IRTS is delighted to sponsor four young ops travelling to Croatia to participate in the YOTA summer Camp. Megan, EI5LA, Niall, EI6HIB, Kelsey and Eoin will travel to Karlovac, located half-way between the Croatian capital Zagreb and the Adriatic Sea in early August to engage in a variety of Radio related activities, hone their operating skills, and meet young ops from other countries. There will be time for operating the latest equipment both locally and remotely, kit-building, and visiting the capital and seaside. The participants are excited to partake in this great opportunity.

New WSJT-X Version

WSJT-X implements communication protocols or "modes" called FST4, FST4W, FT4, FT8, JT4, JT9, JT65, Q65, MSK144, and WSPR, as well as one called Echo, designed to detect and measure radio signals reflected from the Moon. These modes serve to make reliable, confirmed QSOs under extreme weak-signal conditions. There are a couple of noteworthy additions in the new version 2.54 and in the first of the next release candidate version 2.60, introducing a direct dial button for the FT8, FT4, MSK144, Q65, JT65 and FT8 "Hound" mode, adding band hopping, plus an improved decoder for FT8 and Q65. The new version can be downloaded from the servers at Princeton University. Their webpage is at physics.princeton.edu/pulsar/k1jt

WRC 2023

After the previous WRC2019 in Sharm El Sheikh, the next WRC, short for World

Radiocommunication Conferences, will take place from the 20th of November to the 15th of December 2023 in the United Arab Emirates, either in Abu Dhabi or in Dubai, yet to be decided. Without doubt the current discussions about the future of the 23cm band will again be high on the agenda. Telecommunications is not a fixed and invariable given, but is subject to change and expansion. Just think of satellites, drones, GPS, 5G with 6G by 2030, autonomously driving cars, Wi-Fi and many others that use the radio spectrum. Every four years the World Radiocommunication Conferences regulates the global use of the radio frequency spectrum with possible adjustments or revisions for the geostationary satellites. Two years before the conference, the agenda has been finalised with the agreement of the majority of Member States. WRC2019 captured what needs to be discussed with WRC2027. WRC2023 next year is already covering part of that.

Contest News

The 2022 ARRL Field Day wrapped up nearly a week ago, and ARRL Headquarters has already received over 2,400 entries. Early analysis of what turned out to be a very busy contest reveals that most of the entrants participated as Class-D home stations, and as Class-E home stations using emergency power. So far, a total of over 517,000 contacts were reported, expected to soon exceed the over 1.5 million contacts logged in 2021. Conditions for European stations were at times difficult, because the very busy 'King of Spain' contest overlapped with the ARRL Field Day.

The IARU HF Championship has just ended. The volunteers activating the IRTS headquarter stations with the call-sign EI0HQ covered the SSB and CW segments on all bands throughout the past 24 hours. For the first time a chat channel on irts.group.io was used to coordinate a rota, allowing each activator to get a taste of the propagation conditions on each band, rather than sticking to a rigid schedule, it worked well and allowed for a flexible response, employing the stations most effectively during a hectic weekend. The team saw moderate propagation conditions, but logged Kazakhstan and Japan. A more detailed report will follow in next weekend's news, once the logs are sent off.

The next IARU-organised event is the 70 MHz SSB/CW contest, taking place next weekend. Details of the IARU VHF Contest series for 2022 can be found on the IARU Region 1 website.

On Wednesday the SSB leg of the RSGB 80m Clubs Contest takes place between 2:00 and 20:30 UTC. The exchange is signal report and serial number. And on Thursday the all-mode 50 MHz UK Activity Contest runs from 19:00 to 21:30 UTC. The exchange is signal report, serial number and locator.

The RSGB International Low Power Contest is for CW operators to experiment with QRP and low power levels, with a choice of fixed or portable operation. It takes place on Monday, the 18th of July, starting at 09:00 UTC, ends at 3:00 UTC, with a lunch break from 12:00 to 13:00 UTC. The frequencies in use will be 3510 to 3580 kHz on 80m, recommending 3540 to 3560 kHz, 7000 to 7040 kHz on 40m, recommending 7020 to 7040 kHz, and 14000 to 14060 kHz on 20m, recommending 14040 to 14060 kHz. Stations may be contacted once on each band by single- and multiple-operator stations, using 5 or 10 watts in the various categories. Details of the rules, regards exchange, scoring and antenna restrictions are shown in the contest section of the RSGB web-site at www.rsgbcc.org

DX News

Since last weekend, Timo, OH1NOA circles the WWFF targets of the Baltic Sea. For the first time Karula National Park ESFF-0001 will be heard on the HF bands. For the next fortnight Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian WWFF-references will be activated. An up-to-date list of the locations, but also a number of videos showing their highly portable operations can be found by searching the web for OH1NOA .

Loud signals from the Mediterranean could be heard the during the past few days. Mohammed is enthusiastically putting 7T60A on the air, mostly on 15, 17 and 20m, celebrating the Independence of Algeria from his station in the Jefna desert. Other Algerian special event call-signs are 7U60I and 7V60I, both active until the end of the month.

Special event stations 4X21MG and 4Z21MG will be active for two weeks, starting on Monday evening. They support the 21st Maccabiah Games. First held in 1932, the Maccabiah Games are an international multi-sport event held every four years in Israel. QSL for 4X21MG and 4Z21MG via 4X6ZM.

The Special event station CS2Q operating at the 40th International Motorcycle Rally in Faro, Portugal will be active on 80 to 6m on until next weekend on CW, SSB, RTTY and FT8. QSL for CS2Q via CT1EHX. Diploma collectors can claim their award for working five QSO's on different bands and modes. QSL via CT1EHX.

There is a new prefix on the air. Following the official marking of the return of the former British colony of Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China 25 years ago, last week's ITU Operational Bulletin reports the allocation of the new special prefix VR25 for Ham-Radio operators located in Hong Kong.

The Reversed Beacon Net has recently undergone a face-lift, now featuring a more graphics oriented web-page. It started in 2008 as a humble DX skimmer, readable via

text based "telnet" servers, then added a web based version with a world map and overlaid contacts, and spot filters. Initially conceived as a tool to check propagation, it has changed the contesting scene. The web-page is at www.reversebeacon.net with a link for downloading the newest version, plus very readable instructions how to get the most out of this service.

Antarctica Project

For listeners proficient in the Spanish language the following might be of interest: URE, the Spanish National Association of Radio Aficionados will give a live-streamed talk on Wednesday at 19:30 CET, about a project consisting of a network of remote sensors for research in Antarctica, using NVIS, the quasi vertical reflection of signals in the ionosphere. This research is being carried out by the Ramón Lull University in Barcelona. They will talk about the technical infrastructure used in the HF communications project, consisting of SDR transmitters and receivers, sensors, and antennas. In addition to purely technical aspects, the broadcast will also describe everyday life on the Antarctic base, and all the curiosities that this type of experience entails. The talk will be live streamed on www.youtube.com/ureradio .

The Propagation Horoscope

As the summer gets into full swing, keep in mind that the day-time heat can seed lightning in the evening. Keep an eye www.lightningmaps.org or www.blitzortung.org as an early warning tool. Nevertheless, one look out of the window and at the weather charts will delight VHF and UHF DXers, rightly expecting excellent tropospheric propagation combining with the peak of the Sporadic-E season. There are plenty of long openings on 10m and upwards, reaching 2m most days while the large high pressure west of Ireland slowly makes its way into central Europe. A brief low pressure trough passing through will create inversion layers before the next, even larger high pressure zone arrives, adding salt to the propagation soup. Keep an ear on the VHF Beacons in Spain and Portugal, but also the Azores and Cape Verde Island.

In the night from Thursday to Friday a geomagnetic storm raised the kP index to 5, quickly falling back to low numbers, expected to rise again to higher numbers next weekend. A large coronal hole is currently rotating into central view and may be good for surprises. Assuming that coronal hole to remain quiet NOAA predicts next week's solar flux index at 115, slowly dropping to 108. Last week was a mixed bag, occasionally seeing the 3000 km hop MUF rising to 25MHz, quickly followed by unusual short-hop when one could hear UK stations on 20m. Expect to hear a lot more exotic DX this week.

That is the news for this week. Items for inclusion in next week's radio news can be submitted by email to newsteam /at/ irts.ie for automatic forwarding to both the radio and printed news services. The deadline is midnight on Friday.

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